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NATIONALLY BUDGETED

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WASHINGTON - MANY OF THE NATION'S LEADING EDITORS GOT HOT UNDER THE COLLAR HERE THURSDAY WHEN THEY WERE TOLD THAT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WAS ENLISTING REPORTERS AS AGENTS. AND THEY REFUSED TO BELIEVE THAT IT WAS DONE UNDER A PUBLICLY DECLARED POLICY THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF.

ADM. STANSFIELD TURNER, THE CIA DIRECTOR, TOLD THEM HE'D PUBLICLY CHANGED THE AGENCY'S POLICY, WHICH HAD FORMERLY FORBIDDEN THE PRACTICE, THREE YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN, HE SAID, THREE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAD AGREED TO COOPERATE, BUT HAD EVENTUALLY NOT BEEN USED.

THE EDITORS WERE DOWNRIGHT SKEPTICAL AT TURNER'S CLAIM THAT HE HAD MADE THE CHANGE IN POLICY PUBLICLY, BUT THE CIA IN FACT SENT NEWSPAPERS A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ON DEC. 2, 1977, SETTING FORTH NEW REGULATIONS ON ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH REPORTERS AND EDITORS.

THE NEW REGULATIONS FORBODE THE CIA TO USE FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME U.S. JOURNALISTS, PAID OR UNPAID, FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY WERE TO BE ALLOWED, THEY SAID, "EXCEPT WITH THE SPECIFIC APPROVAL" OF THE CIA DIRECTOR.

IN OTHER WORDS, JOURNALISTS COULD BE SOLICITED FOR CIA INTELLIGENCE WORK IF THE DIRECTOR APPROVED.

BOTH THE WASHINGTON STAR AND THE WASHINGTON POST CARRIED THE STORY, AND STRESSED THAT THE DIRECTOR COULD MAKE EXCEPTIONS.

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, THE EDITORS' TRADE JOURNAL, DESCRIBED THE NEW CIA RULES ON DEC. 17 OF THAT YEAR. THE SECOND PARAGRAPH BEGAN BY SAYING THAT "EXCEPT FOR THE PROVISION THAT EXCEPTION CAN BE MADE WITH THE 'SPECIFIC APPROVAL' OF THE CIA DIRECTOR," THE NEW RULES WERE SIMILAR TO THE OLD POLICIES ADOPTED IN 1976. AND THE THIRD PARAGRAPH BEGAN WITH THE